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Key factors for the successful development of Australian indigenous entrepreneurship

Abstract

Tourism is promoted as a pathway to economic and social development for Indigenous peoples. However, the development of successful Indigenous tourism businesses in Australia has been limited. Indigenous Australians experience barriers to enterprise development which are broad in nature and range from economic barriers (such as lack of land tenure), to resource barriers (such as lack of training, education and insufficient infrastructure). Researchers for the Harvard Project in the USA report key factors essential to successful Indigenous entrepreneurship. Three of these factors are the ability of the corporation to engage community members, the ability to secure succession, and the ability to establish proper financial and administrative systems. This paper presents results of research in Australia which supports the importance of these three factors. Using an Indigenist research paradigm, the study was conducted over three years, with the members of an Aboriginal Corporation in New South Wales (NSW). The results highlight the need to build organisational and individual capacity development before instigating enterprise development. Particularly, the results presented in this paper show that instigating appropriate forms of governance is essential to encourage participation and cooperation from community members. Secondly, results show that succession is precarious and that further research is required to establish appropriate ways to encourage and enable young people and women to take on positions of responsibility. Finally, the results support the establishment of proper systems of financial governance, not only to encourage external stakeholder confidence, but also to assist the development and empowerment of individual corporation members.

Keywords:

indigenous tourism; indigenous entrepreneurship; capacity development; Australia

Introduction

Tourism has long been promoted to Australian Indigenous peoples as a pathway to greater economic and community development. In turn, economic and community development is expected to improve the quality of life for Indigenous peoples, address the impoverished state that afflicts many, and diminish their dependence on Government transfers (ATSIC, 1997; NTTC, 2004).

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For Indigenous communities who wish to develop tourism enterprises there are significant issues to address such as the impact of tourism on the culture, social structure and economy of the community (Pera & McLaren, 1999). Many communities are impoverished and suffer from a lack of resources, skills, or capabilities which will support successful entrepreneurship (Altman and Finlayson, 1992).

There are many assertions about the need for Indigenous communities to develop economically (Altman & Finlayson, 1992; Pearson & Kostakidis-Lianos, 2004, Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1991), and many of the policies produced, and research undertaken, alludes to the fact that tourism can be a positive way to develop communities both economically and socially (Altman, 1993; ATSIC, 1997; Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1991). Yet the empirical evidence to support these claims is limited (Goodwin, 2006).

Research into the experience of Indigenous peoples as they embark on developing tourism enterprises is limited; as is research into Australian Indigenous entrepreneurship specifically (Foley, 2000, 2006; Hindle, 2007). Hence the author has drawn on findings from the Harvard University Project on American Indian Economic Development (Harvard Project) from the John F. Kennedy School of Government. The aims of the project were to understand and foster the conditions under which sustained, self-determined social and economic development is achieved among American Indian nations. In all of its activities, the Harvard Project collaborates with the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of Arizona. The project is also formally affiliated with the Harvard University Native American Program, an interfaculty initiative at Harvard University (The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2007). The Harvard Project research presents some interesting insight into Indigenous entrepreneurship in the USA, particularly with regard to the role that governance and establishing financial and administrative systems can play in the development of successful Indigenous enterprises (Cornell, 1999, Cornell & Kalt, n.d.; Jorgensen & Taylor, 2000).

In this article, the evidence from a PhD study undertaken from 2004 to 2007 is presented. With reference to research conducted for the Harvard Project noted above, this paper focuses on three particular factors which are considered to be key to Indigenous enterprise development in the USA, and considers their applicability to the Australian context. Firstly, results are presented regarding cooperation and conflict, particularly in relation to the governance structures of the corporation. Secondly, issues of participation and particularly succession are considered. Finally, results relating to the establishment of proper financial systems are presented. The paper concludes by identifying the commonalities that can be found between the Harvard research and this research conducted in Australia.

Literature review

The Indigenous peoples of Australia comprise approximately 2.4 per cent of the Australian population, (HREOC, n.d.) and represent the most disadvantaged group in the country, with many experiencing relative poverty (ABS, 2002; HREOC, n.d.; Russell-Mundine, Inkpin & Mundine, 2006; SCRGSP, 2005).

To combat the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health, wealth and wellbeing, Governments at all levels have actively encouraged economic development of Indigenous communities and individuals as a pathway to greater independence, increased employment opportunities and less reliance on Government transfers (ATSIC,

1997; NTTC, 2004; Russell-Mundine et al., 2006). In 1991 the Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody highlighted the need for greater economic opportunities for Aboriginal people with tourism promoted as a particularly viable option (Birdsall-Jones, Wood & Jones, 2007; Nielsen, 2007; Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1991). Additionally, policies and associated program development, at both State and Federal levels, have built on the long held belief in the potential benefits of the tourism industry, and have been designed to support and encourage Indigenous entrepreneurship development (see Buultjens, Waller, & Graham, 2005 for overview of Government business development programs). However, the many programs over the years have failed to significantly increase the number of successful Indigenous tourism enterprises. Between 1998 and 2003, only one per cent of tourism trip activity involved Aboriginal culture (Birdsall-Jones *et al.*, 2007, p. 192). The lack of viable Indigenous tourism businesses can be attributed to many causes including those that cause many non-Indigenous enterprises to fail (Pitchervan, Oosterzee & Palmer, 1999). However, there are barriers that are particularly encountered by Indigenous communities which are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

BARRIERS TO TOURISM ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Economic Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty accessing required capital; • Community ownership requires wide distribution of profits; • Financial success can lead to a reduction in program support resulting in negative net benefit; • Lack of control in joint ventures; • Lack of access to land tenure.
Resource Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of adequate managers; • Lack of skills and training in tourism jobs; • Insufficient infrastructure; • Lack of interest in interactions with tourists; • Individuals choosing not to work; • Community conflict and lack of understanding about its causes.
Industry Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations of the mainstream industry regarding professional delivery of product; • Conflict between the tourism industry's reliance on tight itineraries and the observance of cultural and social protocols; • Conflict between Industry requirements for volume products and Indigenous enterprises tendency to accommodate small numbers for limited periods; • Concern about pricing and whether it is possible to be competitive and viable; • Disconnect between Aboriginal culture and the economic and political structures involved in tourism.
Cultural Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that in the process of customising Indigenous culture to attract and entertain tourists that culture may be distorted, exploited and undermined; • Reduced lack of access to land utilised by tourists.

Source: Altman, 1989, 1993, Birdsall-Jones *et al.*, 2007, Craik, 2001, Farrell, 1993, NCSTT, 1994, Rooke, 1993.

Despite these not insignificant barriers, entrepreneurial development in general, is often put forward as a means of addressing Indigenous disadvantage through assisting economic development, and as a way to decrease dependency on government welfare (IBR,

2003; Lindsay, 2005; Naudé & Havenga, 2007; Wuttunee, 2007). Despite these expectations, Indigenous entrepreneurship is underdeveloped and not well understood (Dana, 2007; Foley, 2000, 2003; Naudé & Havenga, 2007).

In Australia, only four per cent of Indigenous people are self-employed and only two per cent are employers (HREOC, n.d.). Additionally, research about Indigenous entrepreneurship in Australia is minimal and lacks theory, rigour and Indigenous perspectives (Foley, 2000; Hindle, Anderson, & Giberson, 2005; IBR, 2003; Lindsay, 2005).

The Harvard project has found two factors are of intrinsic importance to Indigenous entrepreneurship: sovereignty and effective institutions of government (Cornell & Kalt, n.d.). Communities who are able to make their own decisions about what development approaches to take and what resources to develop, as well as bear the consequence for their decisions, consistently out-perform external decision makers (Cornell & Kalt, n.d.; Jorgensen & Taylor, 2000). Following on from the successful establishment of sovereignty and effective institutions of government, the Harvard project research also found that three further factors are critical for successful Indigenous entrepreneurship to address as indicated in Table Two (Cornell & Kalt, n.d.):

Table 2
KEY SUCCESS FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP – HARVARD PROJECT

Key success factor	Strategy to implement
Mobilize and sustain the community's support for its institutions and for particular development strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize decision rules and procedures; • Establish professional financial, personnel and record systems.
Efficiently make and carry out strategic choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a basic economic system; • Choose a development activity.
Provide a political environment in which investors feel secure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate powers, clarity on who controls what; • Separate electoral politics from day to day management of business enterprises.

As indicated in Table 2, appropriate rules, procedures and proper financial and administration records clearly outline the rights and responsibilities of each party, thereby minimising conflict and instability, and ensuring consistency in the case of changes to the board (Cornell & Kalt, n.d.). Financial accountability also provides investment partners and governments with reassurance that the organization is well run with proper decision making regarding the assets of the organisation. This confidence enhances the likelihood of the organisation generating funding or investment relationships (Cornell & Kalt, n.d.). It is these three factors which this paper seeks to examine, and in particular whether these findings can be applied in an Australian context.

Methodology

This study was undertaken from an Indigenist research paradigm using participatory action and observation methods. The methodology was chosen to facilitate the representation of the lived experiences of the Indigenous people as they progressed through the process of community and enterprise development.

Indigenous academics are increasingly pointing to the need for research methodologies to recognise Indigenous knowledge systems, social and cultural protocols and mores. Without such consideration there is the potential for research to continue to contribute to the alienation and exclusion of Aboriginal people (Atkinson, 2002; Martin, 2001a, 2001b, 2002; Nakata, 1998; Rigney, 1996, 1999, 2001).

The term Indigenist research was first used by Aboriginal academic Lester Irabinna Rigney, who drew directly on a feminist research paradigm (Rigney, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001). Since then the theory has been expanded by contributions from other Indigenous academics (Atkinson, 2002; Martin, 2001a, 2001b, 2002; Smith, 2003).

Indigenist research is emancipatory with political integrity, and privileges Indigenous voices by focusing on the experiences, ideas, traditions, dreams, interests, aspirations and struggles of Indigenous Australians (Martin, 2001a, 2001b, 2002; Nakata, n.d., Rigney, 1996, 1997, 2001; Smith, 2003). The study this article reports on was undertaken with particular attention to methods which are consistent with cultural ways of gathering and analysing knowledge.

The role of the researcher, who is non-Indigenous, but connected to the community through marriage, varied throughout the three and half years of the study and included being a mentor with regard to governance and financial matters as well as taking on more active roles. For example, implementing an accounts system and bringing the financial records up to date for audit, and training community members on that system, writing grant applications and developing projects. The varied roles were consistent with the Indigenist research imperative to reciprocate (Martin, 2001b, 2002), that research must be of use to the community who are participating, and that researchers need to give back to the community.

When choosing appropriate methods the researcher strived to be inclusive and respectful of cultural protocols and ways of obtaining knowledge that were acceptable to the participants. These methods included 'yarning', which was understood in this study to mean sharing our stories and listening reflectively to each other. The researcher also engaged in conversation and reflection with participants about observations she made and occasionally unstructured interviews were conducted from which the quotes used in this paper were obtained. Participants were also given the opportunity to review the researcher's use of their words and the conclusions drawn.

The participants of this study were board members of an Aboriginal corporation, Jagun, in Northern NSW. Jagun is a pseudonym utilised to reduce possible risk to the corporation. The name Jagun is a Bundjalung word meaning land, earth (Thieberger & McGregor, 1999). Initials have been used to indicate participants.

Jagun is an Aboriginal Cooperative that owns a rural property bought through a program run by the Indigenous Land Council (ILC) in 1999. It has been developed as a place of retreat and a place for community members to come and live and revive culture. Members can build houses to live there, as well live culturally, for example by obtaining food by hunting. The Jagun community is based on five member families who had a connection to the land they acquired. However, people are also welcomed from other Goorie communities in the region.

Jagun's experience with tourism has been limited, but they have plans for various enterprises which will include tourism projects. It was this desire to develop tourism enterprises which led the corporation to engage in this research. To date Jagun's

tourism ventures have mainly related to specific events and hosting educational groups. Specifically Jagun hosts annual gatherings to give thanks for the land as well as educational visits from University groups and other educational and church institutions. They also run camps for children and are increasingly being used as a venue where various organisations and agencies use Jagun's facilities to run their own programmes. The long term plans are to build cabins, both for community use, and as a business to enable more groups to use the property for either education or recreation. Jagun's long term plans include the development of educational programs and cultural tours as well as the development of a bush tucker catering and café business. Currently the main source of income is from a forestry enterprise agreement and specific project grants from Government and other funding agencies.

Findings

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT

In order to develop successful Indigenous enterprises, Cornell and Kalt (2004) indicate the importance of ensuring community support for both the institution and development programs. Jagun experiences little conflict from amongst its membership, despite all board members reporting conflict experienced in other organisations they are involved in. They attribute this conflict to the actions of Government, particularly in regard to setting up Aboriginal cooperatives through which they administered various programme resources such as housing. The experience of Jagun members was that Governments frequently insisted on the establishment of new organisations which may not reflect appropriate forms of leadership or membership, and which may also be in direct conflict or competition to an already existing organisation:

"Disunity is caused by the government setting up these different organizations. When they first formed co-operatives, they said we had to elect people onto the committee, but they should have had a rule that there was one person from each family because it ended up that one family would be on the committee — they run it — when it comes to things like the housing list their families got first priority." (KT)

Jagun board members were proud of the way in which Jagun had managed to avoid some of these issues and they observed that participation was increasing and there was always large attendance at meetings. KT attributed the high participation rate to the fact that they were constantly telling people what was going on and wanted to be inclusive:

"At Jagun people are pulling together now, I think it's because we have regular meetings and we take the time to explain everything to people. We say to them you are part of here, come to the AGM and make sure we have representatives from each family on the committee — I'm not the boss, I'm there looking after them." (KT)

NT also saw the regular meetings as a strength of Jagun:

"I think people are getting more involved because we have regular meetings. Others have one a year, we update them all the time. It's been a slow process, but it makes them more active, they are happy." (NT)

For RC, the strength of Jagun lies in its family orientation and its connection to their history:

"It is a family based property where the family members work well together. Nobody is trying to be the big boss. Jagun's not like the other organizations who answer to one man; our directors work together. In [town], for example, there is a lot of wrangling between organizations and nepotism. Thank God it's not happening at Jagun. I love going out there." (RC)

"It made us aware of what was Jagun. My family lived there and now I go out there because it brings back a lot of memories. I took people over to look at the property – gives me a sense of freedom." (RC)

NT agrees with the strength of Jagun lying with the family involvement:

"We are family orientated which stands out from other groups. We did go our separate ways from [town], but eventually when Jagun came along we reunited as one body and as family. It brought nearly all the family members together to being one again and working towards the future. As a body we are making our own decisions for ourselves but in other places the Government tells us what to do. Here we make real strong family decisions, everything that happens goes back through the family." (NT)

There is a strong appreciation that Jagun's approach to its structure and governance has been the right one:

"There is nothing we would do differently - we deal with the conflict, we sit down and discuss it, we bring it up at general meeting, and in most cases the committee is supportive of each other. We would have lost control if we'd gone with Government, we feel we've done the right thing." (NT)

As a younger community member, GR's opinion of the strength of Jagun was in its Elders and its ability to bring the families together.

"Elders, in everyway, they are more consistent today than the younger ones who give up easily. They want it today and if they don't see things happening. The Elder's have patience." (GR)

"Jagun is bringing culture back – families are bonding, it's good that we have the Elders and family structure." (GR)

The experience of Jagun's members shows that governance structures must be consistent with traditional forms of governance. In this case, the community found it was important to ensure that each family group was represented by an Elder which encouraged greater participation and also allowed for better and quicker resolution of conflicts because each Elder took responsibility for the actions of their family. While Jagun also had to ensure they were governing in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Registrar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation's (ORATSIC) requirements, they found the language of ORATSIC's documents confusing and difficult to relate to how they wanted to run Jagun. This resulted in feelings of fear and confusion. Although Jagun had instigated a functioning and empowering form of governance they were not confident that they were conforming to their legal obligations. There was also concern that until very recently (2007) the organization had not been able to obtain governance training and they felt let down by ORATSIC in this regard.

Jagun board members believed that communication flows were vital, with members experiencing the benefits of regular, well attended meetings which ensured all members were kept informed. There were however inconsistencies expressed by Jagun board members. On one hand they reported the strength of Jagun being in the involvement of members, the large turn-outs at meetings and the form of governance they employed. On the other hand, they also reported experiencing difficulties in getting people involved in the day to day running of Jagun, particularly the younger generations, and had concerns about succession.

SUCCESSION

Indigenous enterprises are more vulnerable to generational change than mainstream enterprises (Hindle et al., 2005). However, to ensure investor and stakeholder confidence as well as mobilise community support for its projects attention must be paid to issues of succession (Cornell & Kalt, 2004). Jagun is undoubtedly challenged by the issue of encouraging wider, and practical, involvement in its operation. Currently, Jagun is being driven to a very large extent by the male Elders of the families who are clearly developing it for the sake of their children and grandchildren. However, with one notable exception the younger generations, in general, are not taking on significant responsibilities. This is concerning board members:

"We are not always going to be here and we want the young people to show some interest and step into our positions. Our hope is to see Jagun come on after we've gone. We have to talk like that, there's going to come a time when we are not here." (RC)

"We hope that they will feel the same way we do, we don't force them to." (NT)

In talking to the Elders, and despite the obvious successes of Jagun, there is a sense of struggle to pass on responsibility to the younger generations. There is also an inconsistency in the perception of the Elder's about the involvement of younger people, which appears to stem from a reluctance to criticise them:

"We do have concerns about the young ones taking on responsibility we try to stress; you're children you have to learn to take responsibility." (RC)

"Jagun has given me hope, to get back to family, it's a place with incentive and it has got potential. We feel like our younger generation are involved and can carry on from whatever level and appreciate the place". (NT)

"We still find it hard for younger ones to take on roles; there is too much drugs and alcohol. They also don't want to take on responsibility. There is no discipline any more - I blame the law, you can't discipline by belting them with the broom, like the old days. There is no sense of unity or respect for elders." (KT)

"We've offered young ones to be on the committee but they just want to live their lives. I feel confident that if we weren't here they'd step in, but at times we wish we had others." (NT)

It was interesting that during these conversations with the Elder men about the involvement of younger people, the work of GR was neither recognized nor acknowledged. As a young community member it could be said that she is the only one who has taken on a significant and consistent role within Jagun, she is now the book keeper and during the course of this study was also appointed Secretary of the Corporation This is significant as GR is the only woman to hold an executive position within the organization. Her perspective, as a young person herself, is slightly different to the Elders:

"They [the Elders] need to focus on young ones more. Jagun has given them direction in life - because of the drugs and alcohol some of the families need to take on more responsibility to change. The Elder's aren't putting it into action, they are getting things going and then alcohol and drugs thing gets them involved and they sit there with them. Not changing their ways. Young fellas watch the Elders; maybe see Elder's bringing alcohol in there. They have to change if they want the young ones to change. To be an example you have got to show an example." (GR)

Despite the recognition that involving the younger generation is a problematic area, there is also much hope and optimism:

"All the kids do appreciate it to a certain degree and call it home; they are all just living lives and Jagun's running last." (NT)

"We are going in the right direction, we're going places. The young ones will take over, the rest of them will snap out of it. I always talk to them about it. I talk all the time and they sit there and really think. They see there's nobody else." (GR)

Jagun is experiencing issues with succession, there is a great need for younger people to become more involved and take on responsibilities. This study also highlighted the lack of women in decision-making positions. Of particular concern is how the men do not recognise the significant contributions of women, particularly those of a younger generation. The lack of recognition impacts on the ability of women to take on some roles and also impacts on the projects developed which are more often targeting young men, such as building programmes. Further research is required to explore how to involve younger people, and particularly women in the development of the corporation.

GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

The results of this study also supported the need to establish professional administrative and financial record systems (Cornell & Kalt, 2004).

As an Aboriginal Corporation, Jagun is governed by specific requirements such as submitting annual reports and audited financial statements to ORATSIC. Government agencies wishing to fund programs first check with ORATSIC to ensure that the organisation is compliant i.e. is up to date with the reporting. On going failure to comply with ORATSIC's regulations result in deregistration of the corporation.

In 2004, at the commencement of this study Jagun was not compliant and was five years in arrears with its financial reports. In order to address the situation it was decided to undertake a programme which would train community members in administration and bookkeeping.

This results of this study supported the importance of an organisation maintaining effective management and administration systems to ensure stakeholder and investment confidence (Cornell and Kalt, 2004). This study also highlighted the effect that the lack of compliance has on the confidence of the board members. Jagun board members were concerned about the reputation of Jagun and the perceptions of their competence within the community. As the financial systems were implemented it was observable that the confidence of individuals grew.

Over time it was observable that board members became far more confident and were more able to take action about the inability of professionals to act on their behalf.

"The training and accountability is good, we know where we've made mistakes and now we have had people like you as a mentor, we can work one on one, don't see that in training. It's very labour intensive. It's also been really good having NT as treasurer he took on responsibility and had to keep checking things, get the books done right." (KT)

Understanding more about accounts had generally been a challenging experience particularly for the Treasurer, who had previously had no training or experience in accounts or governance:

"Working on the accounts makes me feel – gives me confidence – you know within yourself everything is ok. The part I'm still not knowledgeable about is GST and all that crap. I didn't have a clue what I was putting myself into. Didn't have a clue about it. I was treasurer since we started getting income. I wasn't worried. There have been times I've threatened to quit, but because of your support and because I care for the thing I prefer to suffer it out." (NT)

Becoming competent in accounts was important for the organization, but also of personal value as the Secretary, GR, found:

"I wanted it properly set up in Jagun, not just the building but with the accounts and all that if that's not all done, it's not properly run, that's why I wanted to do it. I like it [the administration work], it's been good experience, I always wanted to learn it since I was at school, but I got into other things. I always wanted to be a secretary." (GR)

After a year of working on the accounts GR was more confident and capable:

"I'm just noticing now, I'm seeing that it's working. They [the committee] thought I wasn't coming back [after her maternity leave] now they can see I was determined." (GR)

The training in accounts had also been an empowering experience for GR which was flowing on to other areas of her life, for example during the course of this study she was voted on to the board as Secretary by members:

"It's easier now; I am achieving something; now I am achieving things within myself. I feel more confident. At the AGM there, all the young ones they were saying you be this, they were saying you do that, you'd be good for that, you're very determined in what you do. When someone nominated me to be the Secretary, you should have heard all the young ones, they were screaming for me and two of their hands went up!" (GR)

Proper governance and financial systems contribute to perceptions of reliability and effective management by stakeholders. However, the results of this study show that establishing such systems also contributes to the development of confidence and empowerment of board members; which in turn contributes to the ability of those board members to further develop the corporation.

Conclusion

The results presented in this paper suggests that successful entrepreneurship requires a certain environment in which to flourish, and that initiating enterprise development without paying attention to capacity development will not produce sustainable results. Developing enterprise in Aboriginal corporations needs to start at a level which builds capacity of individuals and the organisation; that assists in the transition from exclusion and poverty; and that ensures the corporation is able to capitalise on its assets and resources in a way that is empowering and constructive.

In particular the results of this study have supported research undertaken in the USA, and shows that in Australia there are also three key factors which enable the successful development of Indigenous enterprise.

Firstly, that cooperation, participation and the reduction of conflict is best achieved by building on traditional practices of governance; in this case appointing Elders from each family to the board. Regulatory requirements must incorporate and encourage these more culturally appropriate forms of governance in order to facilitate self-determination and provide a solid foundation for enterprise development.

Secondly, this paper highlighted the precarious nature of succession, and that despite the strengths identified by board members, there was still a need to focus on the development of young people as well as women. Further research is required in order to establish the most appropriate ways to facilitate the involvement of youth and women.

Finally, this paper shows that governance and compliance with regulatory requirements is of utmost importance for external stakeholders, but that lack of compliance can be a cause of stress and anxiety for board members. Additionally the research shows that establishing proper systems can be an empowering and enriching experience for individuals which can also impact other areas of their life.

Note on terminology

The term Indigenous is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The term Aboriginal is used when Torres Strait Islander peoples are not being referred to. The term Goorie, which is the preferred term of the participants of this research, is used when referring to Aboriginal people specifically from the Bundjalung region of North Eastern NSW.

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